



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Jon Hanian
(208) 334-2100

GOVERNOR OTTER OUTLINES "TARGETED, RESPONSIBLE, SUSTAINABLE" BUDGET PRIORITIES

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter said today in his annual State of the State and Budget Address that his highest priority for 2014 and beyond is investing in Idaho's "K-through-Career" education and workforce development system in a way that is "targeted, responsible and sustainable."

The Governor reiterated his commitment to "limited, transparent and accountable government that enables economic opportunity and empowers citizens to reach their own best potential." He said those principles also apply to his five-year plan for implementing the recommendations of his school improvement task force.

That includes a budget request for \$54.7 million in fiscal 2015 specifically toward achieving those goals.

"I believe that implementing them will substantially move our policies in the right direction for Idaho's future. That includes making a significant start on a multi-year effort to restore funding to public schools that was withheld during the prolonged economic downturn," Otter said. "It also involves carefully tracking how effectively taxpayer investments are put to work in our classrooms."

The Governor also emphasized the synergy between education improvement and creation of career opportunities through economic development, recommending investments in higher education and professional-technical programs throughout Idaho that are "measured, manageable and within our means."

Elsewhere in his address, Governor Otter:

- Reiterated his support for the Idaho Core Standards and legislative efforts to further clarify the importance the State places on the privacy and security of student data.
- Announced that every Idaho public elementary and middle school is expected to be connected to the Idaho Education Network (IEN) by the end of fiscal 2015. Idaho's broadband Internet education system already links every public high school in the state.
- Proposed funding for local pilot projects aimed at improving school safety and security.
- Proposed funding for high-demand academic programs at Idaho's four-year college and universities.
- Proposed funding to expand the University of Idaho law school program in Boise to a second year.
- Proposed increasing Idaho's investment in the Center for Advanced Energy Studies in Idaho Falls.

- Proposed investment in an Advanced Manufacturing Initiative at the College of Southern Idaho (CSI), North Idaho College (NIC), the College of Western Idaho (CWI), Idaho State University, Eastern Idaho Technical College, and Lewis-Clark State College.
- Proposed funding for outreach programs in Idaho Falls for CSI and in Sandpoint for NIC, as well as a nursing initiative at CWI.
- Proposed setting aside \$35 million in the Budget Stabilization Fund, \$29 million in the Public Education Stabilization Fund, and \$7 million in the Higher Education Stabilization Fund.
- Announced that the Idaho's standard unemployment insurance rate for 2014 is down almost 31 percent. That will save Idaho employers almost \$75 million.
- Stated that his support for a third consecutive year of tax relief "must be in the context of advancing our goals for Idaho's education system."
- Announced the achievement of his "Project 60" goal of growing Idaho's total economic activity to \$60 billion a year.
- Continued his call for changing the direction of Idaho's Medicaid system to one that is more carefully focused on prevention, outcomes and living within our means before expanding Medicaid as proposed by Obamacare.
- Proposed a one-time \$15 million investment in water supply improvement projects statewide.
- Proposed one-time spending of \$2 million to create a Wolf Control Fund, with ongoing costs covered by annual contributions from the livestock industry and sportsmen.

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